2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
SM3 Caingang SM3
Aweikoma

wrapped in each other's arms, lie under a couple of blankets. Children sleep almost anywhere that they can crawl under a blanket, and any solitary sleeper welcomes warm flesh that will help to shelter him against the cold. If children were not welcome sleeping companions it would go hard with them in families where scarcity of blankets would leave them absolutely unprotected.

The Kaingáng are hungry in winter and early spring. Then the tracks of animals are hard to interpret and the tapir can run far and fast, for it is no longer burdened with its young and the forest is cool. To the Kaingáng the tapir is not only the most important food, it is the very symbol of food. When they have no tapir meat there is very little meat of any kind, for the tapir is most plentiful when the wild fruits and nuts are ripe, and when these are gone the monkeys and birds, the rodents and pigs, the deer and the tapir that have fed on them for months, grow scarce or vanish altogether. Many primitive people who are faced with this seasonal scarcity have developed some technique of preservation, but not so the Kaingáng. They preserve only pine nuts and have nothing to support them in these times of hunger.

Summer, with its warmth, its dryness, and its plenty, brings comfort at last to these people who sew no skins and make no warm clothes against the winter, who have no knowledge of boats or rafts to carry them across the rivers that lie everywhere around them, and who, in a hungry land, preserve no food and make no traps. If necessity were the mother of invention the Kaingáng would have all these things, which would make their life easier. If people systematically adapted themselves to their environment the Kaingáng would not only be dogged and skillful hunters, but they would have the traps and the fishing techniques which they completely lack. The men would not only be untiring, uncomplaining providers, but they would have discovered how to preserve the food they obtain with so much effort, so that in the lean days of winter they would not grow weak and retch and vomit with hunger.

The Kaingáng are powerful and of tough physique.[1] The arms and legs of the full-grown men are thick and muscular, and the women, although shorter and less conspicuously muscular, are strong enough to carry heavy loads. Their hair is straight and black, their dark-brown eyes wide and level, their noses high-bridged and coarse, their lips thick. Their skin color ranges from a deep brown to a golden tan. Sometimes a sick person who has lain a long time by the fire, away from the sun, may be practically white. The men, who are about as tall as the average white European, are graceful in spite of their massiveness. It is a pleasure to see them walk—the tangled forest has never let them learn to run—with their high springing

[1] They have very bad teeth.

2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
SM3 Caingang SM3
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step, or balance themselves incredibly on a narrow tree six feet above a stream while hundred-and-fifty-pound loads hang from their heads.

All their lives these people pitted their strength, intelligence, and persistence against the forest, against their ancient enemies the Kangdjá, against the Brazilians, whom they hated and feared, and even against some of their own relatives, of whom they lived in constant terror—eager to avenge murders and sleepless for fear of reprisals. The characteristics of the typical Kaingáng male, tough, resourceful within the limits of his intelligence and experience, dogged and hard to kill, were summed up in one-legged Thuyídn, who died some years ago. In the words of a Kaingáng: "He was not old. In spite of the fact that he had only one leg he used to knock down pine nuts. He would make a loop and climb up.[2] He chopped out honey and killed tapirs. He would run after the dogs. He leaned on a stick in front of him. He had abscesses on the buttocks, back, and hands—he was sick, but he went with them. He was hard to kill. The Brazilians stabbed him in the back and it came out in front. It pierced his lung. Another pierced him below the ribs. He had been shot twice. Once he was cut in the head. He fought. He had seized a knife by the blade and lost two fingers."

There can be no doubt that the Kaingáng bred individuals fit for survival. Certainly men like Thuyídn were born to survive. But for a society to perpetuate itself it must also be able to cope with internal conflicts that might destroy it, and this, Kaingáng society was not able to do. Composed as it was of hundreds of Thuyídns it was nevertheless unable to stay the destruction that certainly would have overtaken it had not the Kaingáng at last established friendly relations with the Brazilians.[3]

As the pattern of Kaingáng culture unfolds in the pages that follow we shall see how this group, excellently suited in their physical and psychological endowments to cope with the rigors of their natural environment, were yet unable to withstand the internal forces that were disrupting their society, and, having no culturally standardized devices to deal with them, were committing social suicide.

[2] Full-grown Santa Catarina pine trees have no limbs within thirty feet of the ground.

[3] In September 1914 the Serviço de Protecção aos Indios accomplished the pacification of the ferocious Kaingáng through the heroism of Eduardo de Lima e Silva Hoerhan.

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648 An organization was formed in Florianópolis by the name of Liga Patriótica [Patriotic League], with the exclusive aim of solving the Indian problem and pacifying the Botocudo of the state [of Santa Catarina].

José Bernardino da Silveira was appointed "Peacemaker." Accompanied by two Indian women who had been captured on one of the batidas, he proceeded to the vicinity of the Rio das Pombas with the intention of establishing there a small "model village" [aldeia de atração]

The results were altogether null; as could easily be foreseen, the Indian women ran away as soon as they reached the woods and were not heard of again.

"Peacemaker" Alberto Fric, another envoy sent by the League, met with the same lack of success. He proceeded to a tributary of the Itajaí do Norte River, but merely collected Indian objects among the civilized settlers.

797 Attempts at "catechism" carried out in 1868 by the Capuchin fathers Virgilio do Amplar and Estevão de Vicenza in Lages and Itajaí did not meet with the slightest success. This was not surprising, for they never penetrated into the interior to establish relations with the Indians.

In 1885, the Capuchin father Luiz de Comitila failed in a new attempt to "catequize" the Botocudo Indians of Santa Catarina.

648 The problem entered a new and decisive phase with the creation of the Federal Indian Protection Service, which on September 22, 1914, finally managed to establish the first peaceful contact with the "ferocious and indomitable" Botocudo of this state.

●142 The Botocudo Indians of Santa Catarina are usually of medium height and well built; the women are short.

147 Their physique is highly developed; their muscular strength and endurance are extraordinary.

Out of their woods, especially when dressed, the Indians never convey a reliable impression of what they truly are. Our clothing altogether conceals the great agility, strength and skill they possess and makes them appear clumsy and sluggish.

To form an accurate idea of their abilities, it is necessary to live with them in the forest and to accompany them on their perilous tasks of hunting, gathering fruit, opening bee nests, and their many

147 other activities. At such times the speed, skill and sureness of each motion, upon which the Indian's life so often depends, come fully to the fore.

The same is true of the women; in spite of their short stature, they are endowed with unusual physical endurance. [119]

452 In the course of their wanderings through the forest, they carry for several weeks at a time enormous baskets filled with heavy loads, with a child nearly always sitting on the top. In addition to all this, they bear in their hands heavy objects such as axes, iron pans, etc. They are, so to speak, the true bearers of the tribe; the warriors carry loads only when away from the women.

●142 Their skin is of a dark tan color, lighter among the women. Their hair is black, coarse and sleek.

164 [752] Dental caries are widespread among them; as children their teeth are already defective. They pull out a tooth as soon as it hurts, and this leaves them almost toothless quite early in life. It is a [64] curious fact that the warriors demand their wives (who are younger, and thus have better teeth) to masticate all their food; this leaves them only the effort of swallowing, which they do while lying comfortably by the fire.

There are no diseases peculiar to the Botocudo Indians. They have, however, been widely attacked by the deadly influenza and its complications, such as bronchitis, pneumonia, etc. They also suffer from rheumatism of the joints and muscles.

[147] The great ease with which their wounds are healed, even when extremely serious, is eminently worthy of note.

Venereal diseases of any sort are altogether unknown among them.

[163] Their high fecundity insures the perpetuation of the tribe.

224 This tribe subsists primarily on the proceeds of the hunt and is therefore nomadic, ever on the move through the woods in search of game. The tapir is preferred on account of the quantity and flavor of its flesh. It is hunted in the following way. The Indians look for a fresh spoor, set their dogs loose, and follow them on the run until the tapir is roused. Then they determine the direction taken by the animal, which always follows its habitual trails, known to the hunters; they take a shortcut through the woods and wait. Spurred on madly by the dogs, the tapir runs toward them and is attacked and killed with the spears.